



MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN TASK FORCE

MEETING NOTES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2003

4:00 P.M.

ROOM 113

Task Force Members Present	Kit Boesch, Susan Dunn, Duane Eitel, Margaret Hall, Elaine Hammer, Rick Krueger, Greg MacLean, Marian Malone, Bill McCoy, Tad McDowell, Eric Miller, Patte Newman, Oscar Pohirieth, Gordon Scholz, Terry Werner. (Nye Bond absent)
Resource Panel Members Present	Mike Brienzo, Susan Epps, Terry Genrich, Randy Hoskins, Larry Worth, Jerry Wray
Others Present	Mike Heyl, Brian Praeuner, Alan Wickman, Kent Morgan, Duncan Ross, Michele Abendroth

Agenda Topics

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Morgan called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Upcoming Task Force Meeting Schedule

Mr. Morgan reviewed the dates and times of the upcoming meetings and distributed a list indicating such.

3. Public Comment Period (10 Min. Maximum)

Alan Wickman noted that many of the trails are widely used by commuters at certain times of the day. He added that it is important to get commuters comfortable using the streets to get to their destination.

4. StarTran and Other Special Services - Larry Worth and Susan Epps

Mr. Worth directed the Task Force to the handout before them, entitled *StarTran Overview*. He stated that StarTran is a division of Public Works and Utilities and is not supported by a dedicated tax levy. The funding that they receive is allocated annually through the City budget process.

There are 21 routes with 30 minute headways during peak hours and 60 minute headways during non-peak hours. Hours of service are Monday through Friday from 5:15 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eighty-six percent of all dwelling units and

employment locations are served within four blocks of StarTran. That is less than their goal, although it is higher than many cities.

Ridership for the fleet buses is 1,529,340 riders annually, handi-van ridership is 29,173 riders annually, and brokerage ridership is 22,670 riders annually. The fleet size is 56 35-foot buses and nine handi-vans.

The last demographics study was done in 1988. The typical rider demographics are mostly female, mostly young or old, about 65% transit-dependent, and about 35% are riders by choice. Approximately 60% of the trips are for work, 20% for school, 9% for shopping, and 11% fall in the other/miscellaneous category.

Funding sources include \$832,973 from federal, \$133,545 from state, \$5,045,526 from the City, and \$1,329,762 in user fees.

There is a StarTran Advisory Board comprised of seven citizens which are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The function is to advise the Mayor, City Council and the Public Works and Utilities Director concerning StarTran operations, specifically transit studies, routes, fares and schedules.

Other programs include the alternate fuels program, employee/student programs, the Big Red Express, Holiday Light Tours, bus advertising, UNL program, 24-Hour Route and Schedule Information Line, and the Alternative Ride Home Program. Promotional programs include citizen-wide advertising and special promotion advertising.

Short-term actions include the implementation of an Automated Vehicle Location System and “Smart Card” fareboxes, implementing an updated dispatch software system, and the replacement of several buses.

Mr. Worth emphasized that one of the most important things in regard to public transportation is the Comprehensive Plan. In his opinion, one of the purposes of the Task Force is to further define and “fill in the blanks” of the Comprehensive Plan.

Future planning actions defined in the Comprehensive Plan include a balanced transit system, transit friendly development, maximizing transit productivity, maximizing transit connections when structuring routes, accommodating transit when designing roadway improvements, exploring regional and commuter transit service options, pursuing transit contract services, pursuing coordination with special transit service providers, exploring park-and-ride opportunities, and establishing a long term transportation funding approach.

Ms. Hammer asked if there were plans to provide racks for bicycles. Mr. Worth responded that there are not. He added that they used to have them, but they were not used and they became a liability issue.

Mr. Scholz asked if there were any plans to increase shelters or passenger amenities. Mr. Worth responded that shelters are in the Capital Improvement Plan every year. He added that they are very costly and also expensive to maintain.

Ms. Malone commented that the routes need to be updated, in particular the signs on the routes.

Ms. Boesch asked if there is a concerted effort to recruit businesses to use public transit. Mr.

Worth stated that their marketing representative, Kitty Miller, works with major entities frequently. Typically, it is hard to convince businesses that they need public transit because they have a huge parking lot for their employees.

Susan Epps of Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital stated that Community Medical Transportation is a program that provides transportation to medical services for individuals who cannot drive or use public transportation independently. The number one problem in providing this service is cost. The cost per one-way trip in town is approximately \$32. They currently offer their service at \$10 per one-way trip. People need same day service, flexibility with appointment times, and flexibility with open-ended pick-up times. With this flexibility comes increased cost.

With respect to collaboration between agencies, a study was conducted to determine the number of vehicles and their use. There are many obstacles including the fact that vehicles are worn-out very quickly. They have come a long way with collaboration, and they are still trying to work on it; however, it cannot be done without a funding source.

Mr. Worth added that the handi-van service is required by the American Disabilities Act. Eligibility for the handi-van is determined by the League of Human Dignity.

Mr. Scholz asked what the eligibility requirements are for the Community Medical Transportation program. Ms. Epps replied that they serve those people who require assisted, accessible transportation. They do not screen riders, because they want to cut down on costs. They also feel that the \$10 fee is a screening mechanism.

5. Traffic Engineering Planning Considerations - Randy Hoskins

Mr. Hoskins began his presentation with a PowerPoint slideshow, entitled *Multi-Modalism in Traffic Operations: Beyond Moving Cars*. He stated that one of the things they have been involved with is bike routes. The on-street bike routes play a very big role in getting people from their neighborhoods to a major trail route. Another area of responsibility is sidewalks, including snow removal, crack repair, ordering in new sidewalks, and site distance concerns. They are also responsible for ADA accommodations, including sidewalk ramps, clearing obstructions, and width of sidewalks. They are also involved with school routes, including safe walk to school maps, marking crosswalks, installing pedestrian signals, and implementing one-way driving plans. Traffic signal accommodations are another area of responsibility. This includes overseeing pedestrian crossing times, trail crossing signals, countdown pedestrian heads, and turn prohibitions. One of the most misunderstood things is how the pedestrian signals work. Public Works and Utilities is also looking at intelligent information systems, including bus pre-emption, smart bus stops, and automatic pedestrian/bike detection. They also work with neighborhood traffic calming, which includes making neighborhoods livable, discouraging cut-through traffic, slowing vehicle speeds, and improving safety.

Mr. Miller asked why there are no stop signs at certain intersections. Mr. Hoskins replied that research has shown that by not assigning right-of-way to either vehicle at an intersection, most motorists will slow down at the intersection, thereby causing less accidents.

Ms. Malone stated that she believes there are some intersections in town that do not give ample time for pedestrians to safely cross. Mr. Hoskins stated that although the time may not be very generous, it should be enough to get people across safely.

6. Other Business

No “Other Business” was discussed.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Morgan adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

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